



FAIR GO FOR PENSIONERS (FGFP)

COALITION VICTORIA INCORPORATED

A0061591N

ANNUAL REPORT

12TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2019-2020

Date: Wednesday, 17th March 2021
Time: 11 a.m.
Venue: AMWU Function Room
Ground Floor, 251 Queensberry Street, Carlton South.

Email: fgfpcalition@gmail.com

Website: <https://www.fairgoforpensioners.com>.

Authorised by Fair Go for Pensioners (FGFP) Coalition Victoria Incorporated. A0061591N

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ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

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**FAIR GO FOR PENSIONERS (FGFP)
COALITION VICTORIA INCORPORATED
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12TH. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2019-2020

Wednesday, 17th March 2021

11.00 am – 12.30 noon

Location: AMWU Ground Floor, 251 Queensberry Street, Carlton South.

AGENDA

11.00am: Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country

1. Apologies.
2. Minutes of Previous Meeting.
3. President's Address.
4. Vice President's Report.
5. Treasurer's Report.
6. To Receive and Adopt the Annual Report 2019-2020.
7. To Acknowledge current Office Bearers to carry over to next AGM;

President	John Speight
Vice President	George Zangalis
Vice President	Joe Montero
Treasurer	Graham Stoodley

To accept nomination of Vera Considine as Secretary.

8. Guest Speakers:

Don Sutherland	Life Campaign
Jaiden Coonan	Australian Unemployed Workers Union

9. Drawing of Hamper.

Close:

Refreshments, Tea, Coffee & Biscuits. (Restricted to COVID regulations)

**FAIR GO FOR PENSIONERS (FGFP)
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MINUTES

**11th Annual General Meeting
Held on Wednesday, 20th November 2019**

At

AMWU Ground Floor Function Room, 251 Queensberry Street Carlton South.

**Meeting declared open at 11.10am with Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country by
Chair, John Speight**

Welcome to special guest, Hon Bronwyn Halfpenny

Present: Invited Affiliate and Individual members

Apologies: Alan Bloom

Confirmation of Minutes of previous AGM.

Approved: Moved Joe Montero/Second Ann Davies

Elections of Office Bearers elected for a two year term - 2019-2021

President:	John Speight
Vice President	George Zangalis
Vice President	Joe Montero
Returning Officer	Frank Cherry

Moved: Claude Antolli/Second Colin Ormsby. Carried

Presentation of Annual Report 2018-2019

- President John Speight addressed the meeting and tabled the President's Report.
- Special mention of the conference held on July 10th 2019 convened by Lew Wheeler, confirming it was an outstanding success with a diverse range of speakers and panellists.
- Other activities including Seniors Festival, Concessions Campaign, Newstart and Centrelink, AUWU Forum and "We are not April Fools" Demonstration, and Housing were covered in his report

Moved Frank Cherry/Second Roger Wilson. Carried

Treasurer's Report:

The Treasurer, Graham Stoodley tabled the Treasurer's Report and thanked the AMWU for continued access to facilities for meetings: Affiliate organisations for their willing support, together with the donations of members making individual donations, including Elaine Speight for the handmade quilt and Kath Cherry for her hand crafted goods and the Melbourne Unitarian Church for photocopying services.

Moved Graham Stoodley/Second Vera Considine. Carried

The President thanked everyone for their attendance and invited all to partake of food and refreshments.

Meeting closed at 11.55am

President's Address

Comrades, Friends and supporters this period continues to be a challenging one for those reliant on Social Security as their main or only source of income, as Social Security.

Wealth distribution in Australia: A report by ACOSS and University of NSW ABS figures (2017-2018) snapshot of the distribution of Income and Wealth prior to Covid-19. The 10 richest household owns 46% share of total wealth Average \$4.75 million, Comfortable Middle 30% owns 38% share of total wealth Average \$1.28 million, Bottom 60% own 16% share of total wealth Average \$277,000. The wealthiest 20%, with average wealth of \$3.3 million, had 90 times the wealth of the 20% with the least, just \$36,000 on average. Investment income is highly concentrated at the top end; almost two-thirds of it is going to the most affluent 20 per cent of households, compared to 44 per cent of all wages.

The top 20% of households pre-tax incomes about \$300,000 per year.

Middle 20% of households pre-tax incomes \$116,000 per year.

Bottom 20% of households pre-tax incomes \$41,000 per year

The report finds the highest 20% of households by income had almost 6 times the income of the lowest 20%. When it comes to wealth, inequality was even more stark.

Political action in Australia in response to the Covid-19 Virus: No doubt you have noticed that the Morrison Government, when faced with the political confronting vision of massive lines of people outside Centrelink offices on the media in reaction to the Covid-19 crisis, they finally agreed to introduce some tax payer labour supported programs, to keep them away from Centrelink offices, including JobKeeper, paid to the Employer to full time workers and those casual workers with more than 12 months employment. But those casual workers with less than 12 months employment gained no assistance, instead they were encouraged to raid their super savings and those on working visas also received no help and were told to leave Australia. As from 1st January 2021, people on the top rate of JobKeeper had their payments cut by a further \$200 a fortnight, while workers on the lower part-time rate face a cut of \$100 a fortnight estimated to effect over 1 million people due to finish March 2021. JobSeeker, a coronavirus supplement for those recipients who were on Newstart, and two \$250 stimulus payments for pensioners and other welfare recipients. Also as from 1st January 2021, people on JobSeeker had their unemployment allowance cut from \$58 a day to \$51 a day.

ACOSS estimated that this JobSeeker cut had lowered payments from about \$21,000 a year to about \$18,500 a year and that if the coronavirus supplement was axed entirely in March as intended, without the base rate being increased, recipients would once again have to survive on about \$14,500 a year, the old Newstart Rate According to ACOSS "People struggling to get by on JobSeeker/New Start, Youth Allowance, parenting and family payments were suddenly able to pay their rent and bills, buy fresh fruit and vegetables, get the medical care they needed and regularly eat three meals a day". "We heard from many families and individuals who were able to buy new clothes and shoes, visit the dentist and take care of medical needs, some for the first time in years".

Report by Anglicare and UnitingCare, Australia will plunge people back into poverty, their research shows of those people on old Newstart rate;
58% who needed emergency relief.
44% coming to their services.
72% skipped meals every week on the old rate.
10% forced to couch surf.
Source 'Jobseeker cuts are a ticking time bomb' 7 News 10 February 2021.

JobMaker; is worth up to \$10,400 per year. Employers will be credited up to \$200 a week for additional employees aged 16 to 29 years, and up to \$100 a week for those aged 30 to 35 years who meet the eligibility criteria. Eligible employers can receive the payment for up to 12 months for each new eligible additional employee they hire between 7 October 2020 and 6 October 2021. ACTU President O'Neil said the scheme made it tempting for businesses to sack someone earning a full-time wage and hire three young and vulnerable people who were desperate for work, for a fraction of the price, and have the remainder of their wage covered by the Federal Government. I'm sure you have noticed that as soon as the Morrison Government judged they could politically phase out these assistances they did, by pretending that the jobs are coming back. Recently, as you are aware, the Morrison Government increased this JobSeeker allowance by only \$25 a week and it seems that the Morrison Government is proud to be forcing millions of Australians to below the poverty level. Already the Government has reintroduced more policies of the so-called Mutual Obligation and continues to harass and victimise people who are already living extremely frugal lives, living in poverty or in deepening poverty, including applying for 20 jobs per month and then an employer can do in a worker they consider not interested to work causing the Government to with-hold their payment.

The Cashless Debit Card: The report conducted by the University of Adelaide, and commissioned by the Federal Department of Social Services, looked at how the program had impacted participants in the communities of Ceduna, SA and the East Kimberly and Goldfields in WA, where the card has been trialed. Another trial site, Bundaberg and Hervey Bay, was not included in the assessment. Most of the research was conducted in 2019 when it found clear evidence that alcohol use had reduced in those communities since the card was introduced, but said that couldn't be attributed to the CDC alone. "They can be attributed however, to the full complement of relevant policies in the trial areas," the report said. A review of the government's controversial cashless welfare card found the program contributes to feelings of stigma, shame and embarrassment, while providing some reduction in alcohol use and gambling. Under the Cashless Debit Card (CDC) program, 80 per cent of an individual's welfare payments are quarantined on a card that cannot be used to purchase alcohol or gambling products. Critics have labelled the program as racist and the Opposition argued the program was racially discriminatory because it disproportionately impacted Indigenous Australians. In December, trials of the program were extended for another two years instead being permanent after the Federal Government failed to win support by the opposition Parties and some cross benches.
Source: Guardian 'Cashless Debit Card program review finds decrease in alcohol and gambling, but participants report feeling 'shame'.

Wage increase estimate: Deloitte Access Economics has estimated Australia's wage gains were only a little over 2% when Covid-19 hit, and forecast they'll only return to that relatively sluggish rate by late 2025 or early 2026, even allowing for the improved recovery prospects accompanying the good news on vaccines, underlying inflation may not get back into the Reserve Bank's comfort zone of between 2 and 3% until late 2023 or early 2024.

International: A recent multi-nation study by the International Monetary Fund examined the effects on income distribution of five major pandemics this century– SARS in 2003, H1N1 (also called Swine flu) in 2009, MERS in 2012, Ebola in 2014 and the Zika virus outbreak in 2016. It found major pandemics had raised income inequality and hurt the employment prospects of those with lower levels of education.

I'm sure that you have observed the struggle for justice is ongoing.

Due to the Covid-19 restrictions as you are aware the normal campaigns by FGFP activities were deferred including our Public Rally in response to the Budget in May 2020. Also due to health restrictions there were less opportunities for face to face meetings but when restrictions were eased we have held Steering Committee meetings in December 2020, January 2021 and February 2021 and March 2021 to discuss the future direction of FGFP. Meanwhile, some Officers and some of our affiliates have been participating in Living Incomes For Life (LIFE) campaigns which have claims similar to FGFP, together with FGFP Queensland and Vintage Reds in Canberra. I would like to acknowledge the hard work of our national community alliance members and look forward to another year of successful representation and grass roots campaign activities.

Particular thanks is given to the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU) for their generous and continuing support.

Sadly, due to health reasons we have received some resignations from very long-time supporters of FGFP including Lew Wheeler. I am sure that you join with me to wish them well and a speedy recovery.

Special thanks to other volunteers including Kath Cherry, and to Vera Considine for volunteering to be our interim Secretary and all other supporters and FGFP volunteers who have given so generously of their time, skills, funds and/or in-kind donations over many years and support during these trying times. As President, I want you to know that without you FGFP would not exist.

Thank you so very much for your dedication and activism.
I look forward to working with you in the future.

John Speight
President
March 2021

Vice President's Report

Our organisation has gone through a difficult year. Much of the work was curtailed by the lockdown and distancing requirements. We're still here though. There is not much to report about the past year and lots of expectations about the year we are entering.

I joined the executive members in keeping our organisation together in the best way we could. A major activity during the period was representing Fair Go For Pensioners on the Living Incomes For Everyone campaign, with which we are affiliated, and building connections around the need to lift all Centrelink payments to a minimum of \$550 per week. This work is beginning to lift the standing of Fair Go For Pensioners and strengthen our national links.

Affiliates and members of Fair Go For Pensioners should participate in the week of action (15-19 March).

The website and Facebook page have kept on going and served as an even more valuable point of communication during the period. The negative side is that we were affected by the standoff with Facebook as Fair Go For Pensioners was deemed a news organisation under the federal government's code of conduct. After the government backed down, things returned to normal.

The website has been redesigned to modernise it and make it more user friendly. It is already starting to attract some more traffic. The challenge ahead is to expand the audience and to integrate it more thoroughly into the activities of Fair Go For Pensioners. Feedback and suggestions on how to improve the website are welcome. The same applies to the Facebook page.

I am suggesting an investigation of moving into short video production. This would lift our capacity to communicate with our audience. Use of video communication is starting to take off in a big way.

Even more important is that we still need more people willing to help write, post our material and other relevant information, photos, and videos. We need people willing to learn about production. Otherwise, the burden gets left in the hands of a few and this is not fair. It also limits what we can do.

Joe Montero
Vice President

March 2021

Treasurers Report 1/7/2019 to 30/6/2020

It is with a hopeful heart that we move into the mid part of 2021.

We who live on an island at the bottom of the world are the lucky ones, affected by the period of austerity in the face of the corporate pushing and pulling of margins and the adjustment to advantage by government and companies alike.

We support the current challenge around ageism, racism and sexism which remains as difficult as ever.

It is in this watershed atmosphere I present the 2019 -2020 Treasure's Report, having been strongly muted by the virus lockdowns and uncertain times.

Us Victorians we did it tough!

Our Opening Balance on the 1st July 2019 was \$3,706.58

<i>Less, 2019 Conference Costs</i>	\$ 2,679.00
August 2019, Balance	\$1,067.00
September –October 2019, Balance	\$1,411.58
November-December 2019, Balance	\$2,465.08
March-April 2020, Balance	\$2,205.08
MAY-June 2020, Balance	\$2,155.08

Our closing Balance on 30th. June 2020 was \$2,155.08

Thank you everyone for your help in this difficult year,

Graham Stoodley

Treasurer
2019-2020

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FINANCIAL STATEMENT

1/7/2019 TO 30/6/2020

Opening Balance **\$3,706.58**

Income

Donations	190.00
Fundraising	<u>1,357.50</u>
Total Income	\$1,547.50

Expenses

Bank Fees	1.00
Catering	2,879.00
Admin & Stationery	160.00
Lodgement Fees	<u>59.00</u>
Total Expenses	\$3,099.00

Closing Balance **\$2,155.08**

VICTORIAN STEERING COMMITTEE 1 July 2019 - 30 June 2020

Executive Members

President & Chair

John Speight – Australian Metal Workers Union (Retired Members Division)

Vice-Presidents

Joe Montero – The Pen

George Zangalis - Ethnic Community Broadcasting Association of Victoria

Treasurer

Graham Stoodley – member Individual Section

Secretary - Vacant

Committee members & representative organisations

Claude Antolli – Melbourne Unitarian Peace Memorial Church

Shane Bell – Australian Metal Workers Union (Retired Members Division)

Alan Bloome – Maritime Union of Australia (Victorian Veterans)

Suzanne Baker - Council of Single Mothers and their Children

Romina Beitseen - CICD

George Catsourakis – Democritus Workers Club

Frank Cherry OAM – Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (Retired Members Division)

Keith Coffey - Rail, Tram & Bus Union (Retired Members)

Vera Considine – member Individual Section

David Cragg – Victorian Trades Hall Council

Ann Davies - member Individual Section

Christopher Lancucki AM - Polish Community Council of Victoria, (Retired 2020).

Anne Maxwell – Australian Unemployed Workers Union

Joe Montero – The Pen

Colin Ormsby – Australian Metal Workers Union (Retired Members Division)

Fiona Ross – Friends of Public Housing

Elaine Speight – member Individual Section

Lew Wheeler – member Individual Section (Retired 2020)

Roger Wilson – Maritime Union of Australia (Victorian Veterans)

Shirley Winton – Independent and Peaceful Australia Network

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Listed below is a summary of Affiliate and Individual Members, their valued continuing support throughout the past twelve months has been greatly appreciated.

3CR Melbourne Community Radio	IPAN
3ZZZ Melbourne Ethnic Community Radio	Sean Kenney
Claude Antolli	Mary Kotsakis
Roselyne Antolli	George Kotsakis
Australian Council of Trade Unions	Christopher Lanucki AM
Australian Manufacturing Workers Union	Carole Lander
AMWU State Secretary Tony Mavromatis	Marion Lau OAM JP
AMWU staff: Carol, Chris, Jenny, Mick, Ali	Ann Maxwell
AMWU Retired Members	Joe Montero
Australian Unemployed Workers Union	Kenneth Mooney
Suzanne Baker	Paul McCourt
Romina Beitseen	Father Bob Maguire
Owen Bennett	Maritime Union of Australia (Veterans)
John Burne	John Mathieson
Rita Camilleri	Melb. Unitarian Peace Memorial Church
Joseph A Caputo OAM JP	Colin Ormsby
George Catsourakis	Leanne Petrides
John Catterina	Polish Community Council of Victoria
Frank Cherry OAM	Rail, Bus & Tram Union
Kath Cherry	Janine Reilly
Keith Coffey	Allan Richardson
Vera Considine	Fiona Ross
Len Cooper	Donna Sensa
David Cragg	Kris Spark
Council of Single Mothers & Children Vic	Elaine Speight
Council on the Ageing	John Speight
Darebin Progress Association	Graham Stoodley
Jenny Davidson	Donna Swan
Ann Davies	Les Twentyman OAM
Chip Eling	LT Fund
Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria	Victorian Trades Hall Council
Pas Forgione – ACOSS	Mary Walsh
Carina Garland VTHC	Alan Warriner
Vic Garang	Pat Warriner
Marion Harper	Lew Wheeler
Howard Haverley FOPH	Perce White
Vicki Herbert	Roger Wilson
Luke Hilakari	George Zangalis
Heather Hill	



WHO WE ARE

FAIR GO FOR PENSIONERS (FGFP) COALITION VICTORIA INCORPORATED A0061591N

WHO WE ARE

Fair Go for Pensioners (FGFP) Coalition Victoria Incorporated was established in Victoria in 2007. It is an independent not-for-profit coalition of community-based organisations, unions, faith groups, peace groups and individuals advocating for social justice for pensioners, single parents and their children, unemployed people, affordable housing for renters in all housing types, especially public housing tenants and other low-income groups marginalised by financial hardship, poverty and inequality. FGFP is non-party political.

WHAT WE DO

FGFP advocates for and mobilises pensioners, single parents and their children, unemployed people and other low-income groups and their supporters to gain significant improvements in living standards, income and related services for those living in poverty or in financial hardship.

Our work includes direct action, advocacy, community organising, building the coalition, media, public education and research and is underpinned by human rights and activism. We work towards a just society where everyone counts.

COALITION MEMBERS

Representative organisations on FGFP Victorian Steering Committee include Australian Unemployed Workers' Union, Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (Retired Members Division), Council of Single Mothers and their Children, Combined Pensioners & Superannuants Association of Victoria, Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria, Friends of Public Housing Victoria, Democritus Greek Workers League, Housing for the Aged Action Group, Maritime Union of Australia (Victorian Veterans), Independent Peaceful Australia Network, Melbourne Unitarian Peace Memorial Church, Polish Community Council of Victoria, Rail Tram and Bus Union Victoria, The Pen, Les Twentyman Foundation, Victorian Trades Hall Council. FGFP joins other community groups including churches, faith groups and peace groups on a single issue or a range of issues and/or endorse our annual activities. FGFP also has an individual section established in December 2013.

For more information contact

VICTORIA

John Speight – President

0425 753 754

Jo Montero – Vice President

George Zangalis – Vice President

0417 777 542

Email: fgfpcoalition@gmail.com

Website: <https://www.fairgoforpensioners.com>.

Postal Address:

C/o AMWU, 1st Floor Reception

251 Queensberry St

Carlton South Vic 3053

FGFP coalition acknowledges the owners of the land on which we meet the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. We wish to pay our respect to their Elders -past, present and future.